

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement in response to President Obama's address to the nation Monday evening regarding the U.S. military involvement in Libya:

"There is no question that there is an ongoing humanitarian crisis in Libya, driven by Muammar Gaddafi's disregard of basic human rights and continued use of force against his own people.

"As a nation still paying a hefty price for our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, I had hoped the President would have been more cautious and conferred with Congress before getting the U.S. military involved in a third conflict. One of my biggest concerns about the U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan was the lack of a coherent military strategy from the outset. Unfortunately, I see this same issue arising in Libya where we seem to be focusing on the process of intervention rather than the overall strategy.

"A clear strategy, with stated goals, objectives, and an exit plan, is necessary before sending our young men and women into harm's way. As of now, I do not see a clear strategy in place and this is very troubling. Initially, the President had stated his goal as a regime change in Libya. Now, the President is justifying U.S. involvement as a sense of moral duty to intervene before further massacres occur. But if we are defining ourselves in this way, there are many other areas of the region and the world which are experiencing similar turmoil. In that case, I would have to ask: Why Libya? Why not Yemen, Sudan, Bahrain, or Syria? And if those conflicts also demand our intervention, where do we draw the line for U.S. involvement?"

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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